

PA-PAC Questionnaire for Durham Public School

Board of Education 2018

When answering this questionnaire, please repeat the questions in your response document with their numbers as they are organized here. Type your responses in italics or a different font to distinguish your responses from the questions. Thank you for your participation! **Total number of pages should be limited to 10, including the questions. Please use at least 11 point font.**

Please return completed form along with your resume describing education, work history, community service and prior political experience AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, but by **March 09, 2018 at the latest**

Email responses to chrismbriggs@gmail.com

Please note that following above deadline, the Durham People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and your willingness to serve the people of Durham.

Candidate Name: Katie E. Jones

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I am running for District Seat 1 2 (3) 4

School Board

1. Why do you want to serve on the Durham Public School Board of Education? What is the role of a board member?

I am a proud, retired Durham Public Schools (DPS) teacher; 25 years. We have lived in Durham for 46 years. Our children attended and graduated from DPS. My career began in 1989 as a Teacher Aide (title at that time) at Parkwood Elementary. Having a B.S. Degree, I returned to college to earn Teacher Certification with a scholarship from Governor James Hunt's initiative for Teacher Aides. I completed my Student Teaching at Y.E. Smith and my first semester of teaching at Fayetteville Street. Returning to Parkwood in August 1994, I

later transferred to Creekside in January 2005; Creekside was our designated attendance zone. I want to be instrumental in structuring a competitive DPS where parents can't wait to enroll their child(ren) and know their child(ren) are safe and learning, all students are enthusiastically excelling, and teachers are provided the necessary staff, schedules, resources, and staff development to teach and are excited about being/remaining a part of the staff.

As a member of the Durham County Board of Education, I will attend Board meetings and committee meetings. I will work with the Board to: (1) establish and implement district-wide policy in areas such as discipline, attendance, grading, and personnel, (2) set overall goals for the district and monitor progress. (3) adopt education programs and curriculum, (4) set the school calendar, (5) approve the budget each school year, (6) make decisions about school construction/closings, (7) set attendance zones and policies for magnet programs and regular schools, (8) supervise the Superintendent and, if necessary, hire a superintendent

2. In what ways do you see yourself and the school board interacting with the superintendent? What do you think the most important issues are to hold the superintendent accountable around? If as a school board member, problems in a hresolve them?

The Board will support the Superintendent in providing leadership for the district, coordinating district-wide planning, and providing directions for DPS administrative staff. The Superintendent must be held accountable for district-wide planning that institutes best practices in all classrooms, providing for: safe and productive learning environments, and providing supervisory directions for our principals. As a member of the school board, we must work collaboratively with the Superintendent to achieve the highest level of academic, social, and emotional outcomes for all our students.

3. How should teachers and administrators be evaluated? Are the current state standards effective?

As I was preparing to retire, the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), was being implemented. This instrument, along with other sources of data, was to be used to examine the impact of districts, schools, and teachers on the learning outcomes of students in grade levels, subjects, and specific courses; revealing patterns in subgroup performance. Each person employed by DPS, and defined as a teacher should receive at least two evaluations per year. The evaluations, whether formal or informal, are career-status specific. There are plans in place to assist teachers who need intervention.

4. How should students be assessed? What role should standardized tests play in evaluating students? How do you feel about the new superintendent's approach to testing?

Students should be assessed on in-class performance, standardized tests, and overall academic growth. Students come to the classroom at different developmental stages. Teacher-made tests should assess students on what they have been taught. Prior to administering, test should be reviewed for bias and content-specific vocabulary during grade level meetings.

Standardized test scores give valuable information on performance and placement while highlighting areas that need intervention, corrective teaching and support; based on a norm. It is through standardized testing that teachers are able to objectively identify historically underrepresented students for further testing and placement in the academically and intellectually gifted program. Also, test taking can be an avenue to better test-taking skills, reveal student anxiety in test-taking, and provide opportunity for intervention or modifications. It is encouraging to know that Grade 3 BOGs are populated with Grade 3 level items.

Dr. Mubenga, was chosen from a very diverse and qualified group of 42 candidate. His experience, leadership, and dedication to students and community were key elements for making him the choice for DPS. He has served as husband, father, classroom teacher (Math), assistant principal, principal, adjunct professor, and superintendent. He indicated that he would take the first 90 days to gather and analyze quantitative and qualitative data. During a recent presentation, I did not hear information relevant to his approach to testing. His approach appears to be transformative. Based on 2016-17 data, DPS had 18 Low Performing Schools; 12 elementary, 5 middle, and 1 high school.

5. Durham Public Schools have become increasingly segregated by socioeconomic status and race. What are your thoughts on this situation?

This should be a concern for all stakeholders. According to the NCDPI DPS District Profile, though the number of students in a typical DPS K-8 classroom is at or below the State average (except 8th grade, +1 above), DPS teacher turnover rate and principal turnover rates are higher than the State. The percentage of DPS students scoring at Level 4 (Solid Command) and Level 5 (Superior Command) on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests for reading, math, and science were lower than the State. Performing at Level 4 and Level 5 shows that students are ready for the next grade and meet North Carolina standards for College and Career readiness. Also, it appears that parents are exercising their right to choose other schools over DPS. The question is why and the answer is obvious; higher level of student performance and better chance at being college and career competitive.

6. Recent data has suggested that, despite the programming implemented to decrease suspensions in DPS, the numbers of suspensions in some of our schools continues to rise at concerning rates. It is also clear that suspensions disproportionately affect black and brown male students. What do you think the district should do to address this issue?

Schools should strive to be diverse, inclusive, and culturally aware. Black students are reported to be expelled or suspended 3X more than their peers. White students are suspended for objective infractions such as smoking or vandalism while African American students are suspended for subjective actions such as talking back and insubordination. It is noted that schools with a student population of 50% or more black students; have on-site police officers; with, seemingly, the perception or assumption being that there will be more infractions and/or crime. Jason Langberg, supervising attorney for Advocates for Children Services, a project of Legal Aid of North Carolina investigated the racial lopsidedness in student suspensions in Wake County. In his analysis of discipline data, black students in the county's schools were suspended five times as often as their White peers. But, there was no evidence to suggest that black students acted up more often or more severely than white students. It was his conclusion that this disparity is found not just in Wake County.

Consequently, the Board of Education and all stakeholders (students, parents, grandparents, community leaders including, school based administrators, central office personnel, etc.) must work to craft self-governing schools where the need for police officers is decreased or non-existent. The focus should be on providing students with the tools and skills to practice self-control and using positive discipline practices such as restorative justice. Restorative justice is an approach where victims, offenders, and community members meet to decide how to repair the harm that has been caused between students allowing them to remain in school and retain their dignity. Emphasis is on accountability and making amends. Schools using restorative justice have reported that chronic absenteeism decreases and graduation rates increase.

7. What is your opinion about the Charter School movement in NC, especially in Durham?

Many see this as charter schools versus traditional and/or magnet public schools. Charter schools receive public funds. It is about choice.

8. As a board member how would you address the needs of the students who are at risk for low achievement and leaving high school before graduation? How do you see yourself working on this as a district-wide issue?

There may be possible help with the recently implemented CEDARS program which supports efforts to use high quality data about students, staff, programs, and finances to make policy and service decisions that will improve student outcomes. Also there is the SEED data program designed to help participating states track, monitor, and share information for transfer students from other states or within-state identify students who may be reflected as a "drop-out". There is data available to teachers, parents, and principals that throughout a student's academic career that provide clues to the possibility of a student not finishing high school. We should be using this data to academically intervene on behalf of the student. Hopefully, personal and academic indicators will show that the student may be making a decision to leave school before graduation. There are many community programs currently working within schools to intervene and provide a mentor for the

student. Also, there is North Carolina legislature in the works to increase the age for dropout.

9. Why do you think that parents choose to take their children out of the public schools in Durham or don't choose them at all? How would you address this issue?

As a parent to four children, I think parents will always, when possible, choose what they conclude is best for their child(ren). We must focus on making DPS the best choice. We must be diverse. We must be equitable. We must be inclusive. Parents must feel that they are partners at all levels. Adopted curriculum must be parent resource friendly and inclusive. We must hold high expectations for academics, behavior, and strike a wonderful balance between discipline and love. Schools must be physically safe but also nourishing environment when students know they are safe to take academic risks without fear of negative reactions or retaliation from peers, teachers, and adults.

Durham is a wonderful place to live, learn, and work. I will be instrumental in working with all stakeholders to structure a Durham Public Schools in which: (1) parents are competing to enroll their child(ren), (2) all students are present, safe and excelling, (3) teachers are excited about the opportunity to become members of our staff, enthusiastically teaching and proud to remain, (4) administrators arrive every morning knowing that they have the staff, resources, and support to conquer the day and ensure that all students are prepared.

10. If you could do three things to improve Durham Public Schools, what would they be?

Increase percentage of students performing at Levels 4 and 5 on N. C. End-of- Grade Tests

Ensure timely access to funds and data to intervene early; preferably preK-2.

Increase retention rate for teachers and administrators

11. What is your position about the state class size mandate for grades k-3? If it passes, should DPS adopt the legislation financially and logistically?

The last report I heard was emphasizing smaller class size. Smaller class size is one entity in increasing the overall performance of our students. Though mandated, other items that must be considered financially and logistically are:

Classrooms to accommodate additional classes

Teachers to teach additional classes

Possible increase in counselors if counselors are doing whole class services

12. If you are an incumbent, what are the three things that have happened during your term that you are the most proud of? If you are a new candidate, what are three positive things that you have observed happening in DPS?

I am a new candidate. Three positive things that I have observed happening in DPS are:

High Attendance Rates for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

District's Four-Year Graduation Rate around 80%, according to recent meeting attended.

No serious incident of gun violence in our schools.

13. What do you think is a reasonable and realistic pathway and timeline for achieving universal pre-k for four-year-old children in Durham?

Creekside Elementary was designed to accommodate pre-K classes. When Creekside was completed, the student population had outgrown the space and classrooms for pre-K were no longer an option. The District must be proactive in planning so that this does not happen. According to the Durham-City Planning Department, the projected population growth for Durham city and county for 2015-2045 will be continuous increase. The yearly population growth for 2010-2016 was 1.8% for the city of Durham and 1.6% for the county. The "under 5 years" age cohort was 6.9% in 2016. It is encouraging to see the completion of the Whitted School renovation that will house up to 144 Pre-K students.

14. The School Board will be asking our board of county commissioners for local funds for DPS this spring. What is your top priority for increased funding? Do you see places for realizing savings in the current budget?

According to the Durham County Commissioner's 2017-2018 Approved Budget, DPS requested \$140,410,707 and was approved for \$134,035,201; with additional funding or DPS in the amount of \$6,059,494.

Top Priority for Increased Spending (2018-19):

More Pre-K Projects

Teacher and Assistant Principal Recruitment and Retention

More Counselors, Nurses at all levels

Personal Information

15. Please describe your educational background (skip if resume included)

Eastman High School, Enfield, North Carolina (1971)
North Carolina Central University, Durham, NC (B.S, 1975)
North Carolina Central University, Teacher Certification (1993)
North Carolina Central University, AIG Licensure (2005?)
Apex School of Theology, Master of Christian Education (2011)

16. Do you have children? If so, where do they, or did they, attend school?

We have four children.

Child 1: Parkwood Elementary, Lowes Grove Middle, Jordan High, Hillside High School Graduate

Child 2: Parkwood Elementary, Lowes Grove Middle, Hillside High School Graduate

Child 3: Parkwood Elementary, Lowes Grove Middle, Hillside High School Graduate

Child 4: Parkwood Elementary, Creekside Elementary, Rogers-Herr Year Round, Josephine Dobbs Clements Early College High School Graduate

17. Please describe your adult employment history (skip if resume included)

Durham Public Schools, Teacher/Academically and Intellectually Gifted, Reading and Mathematics (2011-2015)

Durham Public Schools, Teacher (Grades 3 & 4) (1994-2011)

Durham Public Schools, Teacher Aide (1989-1994)

North Carolina Central University/Work-Study Student, Clerk Typist/Library Assistant (1971-1972)

*North Carolina Central University, Work Study Student (Clerk-Typist) (1972-1975)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Research Triangle Park, NC*

*Clerk-Typist/Section Secretary (1975-1984)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Research Triangle Park, NC*